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IS 501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World

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Asbury Theological Seminary-Orlando Campus
IS501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World
Fall 2003 Thursday 6:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

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Introduction

What is the mission of the church? Behind this question is a cluster of related questions, the most important focused on the nature of God's creative and redemptive purpose, its ongoing expression in the world, and its consummation in the eschaton. Participants in this course will explore how the church might discern, embrace, and participate in God's own mission.

Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate their understanding of the biblical metanarrative that comes to focus for us best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God;
2. Identify the particular contribution of the Wesleyan tradition to our understanding of this metanarrative;
3. Draw out major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative, especially as these are related to the nature and mission of the people of God;
4. Evaluate cultural products (e.g., literature, television, movies, advertisements, print media, music) in light of major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
5. Exercise criticism with respect to one's own cultural context and discernment with respect to the context of others vis-à-vis major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
6. Articulate the ecclesial and missional implications of this metanarrative – specifically for one's own context and generally for our shared global context; and
7. Exhibit a heightened sense of commitment to serving the kingdom of God in mission in the world.

Required Reading:

Clapp, Rodney. *A Peculiar People*. InterVarsity Press, 1996.
Hauerwas, Stanley and William Willimon. *Resident Aliens*. Abingdon
McClaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. Jossey-Bass, 2001.
Snyder, Howard. *A Kingdom Manifesto*. Wipf and Stock, 1997
Wright, Tom. *The Challenge of Jesus*. InterVarsity, 1999.

Recommended Reading:

Clapp, Rodney. *Border Crossings*. Brazos Press
Hauerwas, Stanley. *A Community of Character*. University of Notre Dame
Newbigin, Leslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*.
Eerdmans
Stackhouse, Max. *The Church in a Global Era*. Eerdmans

Evaluation:

- Active and Substantive Participation in Small Groups. (10 %)
The small group will meet every Thursday from 8:10 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. to reflect, discuss, and fulfill assignments given in class. Each person in the group is expected to lead the group's work at least once during the semester.
- Active and Substantive Participation in On-Line Conferences. (10%)
In order to participate in the On-Line Conferences it is IMPERATIVE to have full access and basic knowledge of Asbury's First Class e-mail system (the On-Line Conferences will be conducted using this system). Each person in the class will have an IS501 icon in their First Class e-mail, and each small group (same as above) will have an icon for their On-Line Conferences where you will find questions and other items for discussion and group interaction posted by the professor.
- Kingdom Project (a small group project) and Presentation (15 %)
Each student in each group is required to spend 12 hours of personal work/involvement in a "Kingdom Project." This is a group project every member is expected to actively participate in the group's choice, however each member may participate (12 hrs) at a different time and date than the rest of the group. In order to facilitate this project, a list of local ministries and resources will be provided. However, due to the nature and composition of ATS-Florida's student body, the group is encourage to find other suitable (in consultation with professor) churches, para-church organizations, social service agencies, and community related organizations closer and/more accessible to most members in the group. After completion of Kingdom Project, each group will share its experience with the class on **Thursday, Dec. 4**. Thus the Kingdom Project, group and individual participation, should be completed beforehand.
- Personal reflection (written): Kingdom Project (5%)
Each member of each group will write a personal reflection of his/her experience in the project in the light of class readings and lectures. The goal of this paper is to integrate your experience of doing the kingdom project with the theological reading and work done in class. Please write no less than 3 (three) and no more than 5 (five) pages and the reflection must be typed or printed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing.
- Mid-Term: Take-home, open-book exam; Students will receive it on 10/16 due on 10/23 (30%)
- Final-Exam: In class exam (12/11) including objective and short-essay questions (30 %)

Grade Range: Work for IS501 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

<i>A = 95-100% Unusually high quality, exceptional work</i>	<i>D+ = 67-69% Minimal work</i>
<i>A- = 90-94% Far above average, fine work</i>	<i>D = 63-66% barely acceptable</i>
<i>B+ = 87-89% Above average for graduate work</i>	<i>D- = 60-62% for specific assignment</i>
<i>B = 83-86% Very good, average for graduate work</i>	<i>F = 59% or below Failure.</i>
<i>B- = 80-82% Slightly below average for graduate work</i>	
<i>C+ = 77-79% Meets requirements, but noticeable inadequacies for graduate work</i>	
<i>C = 73-76% Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work</i>	
<i>C- = 70-72% Meets requirements, but serious gaps</i>	

Incomplete Work: “A grade of ‘I’ denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an *unavoidable emergency*, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of the course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as ‘F.’ ” From ATS 2001-03 Catalog p. 29 (emphasis added)

Attendance Policy: One class may be missed without makeup. After this (one class missed), extra reading is required (50 pages per day missed: from the recommended reading list) and a one page single-spaced paper summarizing the extra reading. If three classes are missed—serious conversation between student and professors is needed and reduction of grade might be required.

Notes on Small Groups:

The first week of class you will be assigned to a small group of five persons. This group will be an essential part of the class. With these five people you will work on assigned material, process readings and class material and work together on a Kingdom project. A minimum of 50 minutes of each week will be devoted to working with your small group. This same small group will also be responsible for organizing and completing together a Kingdom Project.

Small Group Guidelines

1. During the first week of class, you will be placed in a KCW Group of 5 persons. Because Christian living and witness are important aspects of this course, we have set aside 50 minutes of class time for you to meet. We hope that your schedules may permit you to meet longer in order to facilitate group cohesion and trust. We have built this group experience into our weekly class time so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find time for an additional meeting outside of class.
2. The purpose of this group is to meet together to share insights from the weekly disciplines, to hold each other accountable, and to encourage each other toward living faithfully as witnesses to the Kingdom and the lordship of Christ in our lives.
3. Each group will be student led and all group members will share leadership. Leaders will be selected for the first all sessions during the first meeting of the group.
4. One student in each group will take attendance. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.

5. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

Online Discussion Guidelines:

1. Your same small group will also participate in online discussion related to the course material. You will need to have an Asbury Seminary e-mail address to access the class folder on First Class Client.
2. Every other week your team will discuss the question as it is posted within the team folder.
3. This class feature calls for good “e-manners.” Please limit each posting to 50 words or less [unless instructed to do otherwise]. Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, *so be careful how you put things in writing!* You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis.
4. The professor will monitor and grade the team interaction and discussion assignments that occur via e-conference.

Some examples of evaluative criteria may include:

1. Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected your understanding of the course material and its relationship to the question posed?
2. Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?
3. Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?
4. How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?
5. How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?
6. Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?
7. Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to academic writing?

Course Schedule:

Introduction

Week 1 – Sep. 4 Introductions and Organization of the Course

- Introductions and General Overview
 - Course Objectives
 - Course Procedures
 - Small Groups: Selection, Process, Leadership, and Expectations
 - Conferences: Selection, Process and Expectations
- Required Reading for next week: Clapp, pp. 9-75; Wright, pp. 13-33

Module One: Kingdom – Living the Biblical Story

Module Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the importance of “story;”
2. Discern how cultural products participate in inviting us into certain stories;
3. Articulate the basis for the unity of Scripture in the overarching plan of God, from Creation to New Creation;
4. Articulate the hermeneutical importance of the incarnation for understanding the biblical story;
5. Articulate how Wesley’s understanding of the soteriological journey serves as a hermeneutical compass for reading the biblical story;

Week 2 – Sep. 11 Narrative, Post Modernism, and the Biblical Story

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 34-73; Snyder, pp. 9-76

Week 3 – Sep. 18 Old Testament

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 74-149

Week 4 – Sep. 25 New Testament

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 150-197; Clapp, pp. 76-93.

Week 5 – Oct. 2 Thematic integration of Scripture and Wesley's Order of Salvation

Required Reading for next week: McLaren, pp. 1-53; Clapp, pp. 94-125.

Week 6 – Oct. 9 Who are the People of God?

Required Reading for next week: McLaren, pp. 54-93; Clapp, pp. 140-157.

Module Two: Kingdom and Church

Particular Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Enumerate significant ways in which the ongoing life of the people of God participates in and extends the biblical story;
2. Articulate how kingdom-living relates to a community of believers;
3. Articulate an ecclesiology oriented around participation in the kingdom;

Articulate basic forms of ecclesial practice (e.g., hospitality, mission) that are a necessary outgrowth of an ecclesial commitment to performing the kingdom.

Week 7 – Oct. 16 The People of God Through History

Required Reading for next week: Clapp 158-171; McLaren, pp. 94-165

Assignment: Pass out Take Home Exam

Week 8 – Oct. 23 The People of God in Contemporary Context

Required Reading for next week: Clapp, pp. 172-212; Snyder, pp. 79-120

Assignment: Mid-Term Exam Due today, October 23, at the beginning of class

Module Three: Kingdom, Church, and World

Particular Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the significance of the kingdom in terms of its cosmological and eschatological significance (rather than in individual and subjective terms);
2. Demonstrate that they have begun the process of thinking theologically – i.e., situating life within the interpretive and critical horizons of a theological vision of the purpose of God for creation that comes into focus best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom;
3. Draw out inferences of this view of the kingdom with respect to a range of social-ethical issues (e.g., racial reconciliation, environmental ethics, gender issues);

Demonstrate the importance of understanding one's world in performing the kingdom;

Week 9 – Oct. 30 Listening to the World

Required Reading for next week: Clapp, pp. 126-139; Hauerwas & Willimon, pp. 1-48

Week 10—Nov. 6 Acting in the World

Required Reading for next week: Hauerwas & Willimon, pp. 49-111

Assignment: Work on Kingdom Project Presentations

Week 11 – Nov. 13 Speaking to the World: Witness & Worship

Required Reading for next week: NO READING

Assignment: Work on Kingdom Project Presentations

Week 12 – Nov. 20 Thy Kingdom Come

Required Reading for next week: Hauerwas & Willimon , pp. 112-172

Week 13 – Nov. 27 No Class Today! Enjoy your Fall Reading Week.

Week 14 – Dec. 4 Kingdom Project Class Presentations

Reading: Prepare for Final Exam

Week 15 — Dec. 11 Final Exam